

State Environmental Quality Review
NEGATIVE DECLARATION
Notice of Determination of Non-Significance

Project: Syosset New Underground 13kV Feeder and Overhead Reconductoring (the “Proposed Action”)

Date: January 23, 2025

This notice is issued in accordance with Article 8 (State Environmental Quality Review Act) of the Environmental Conservation Law and its implementing regulations at 6 NYCRR Part 617 and 21 NYCRR LXXXI 10052.

The Long Island Power Authority (“Authority”) has determined, based on information provided by PSEG Long Island and the Environmental Assessment Form Parts 1, 2 & 3 prepared by PSEG Long Island that the Proposed Action described below will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement should not be prepared.

Name of Action: Syosset New Underground 13kV Feeder and Overhead Reconductoring (the “Proposed Action”)

Location: South Woods Road, Stillwell Lane, Cold Spring Road, North Hempstead Turnpike/New York State Route 25A, Lawrence Hill Road, Harbor Road, Cove Road, and Moores Hill Road, hamlets of Woodbury, Syosset and Cold Spring Harbor, and the Village of Laurel Hollow, Town of Oyster Bay, Nassau County, New York

SEQR Status: Unlisted

Conditioned Negative Declaration: No

Proposed Action Description:

The Proposed Action consists of the installation of an approximately 3 mile, 13 kilovolt (kV) UG distribution feeder, an extension of an existing UG feeder, and upgrades to existing OH distribution circuits located in the hamlets of Woodbury and Syosset and the Village of Laurel Hollow, Town of Oyster Bay, Nassau County, and the hamlet of Cold Spring Harbor, Town of Huntington, Suffolk County, New York. The Proposed Action is being completed to prevent normal and contingency overloads of existing feeders currently serving the area due to, in part, the expansion at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. The Proposed Action will also support anticipated load growth in the surrounding area by providing additional electrical capacity and switching capabilities, which will result in improved electrical reliability. The location of the Proposed Action is depicted on Figure 1.

As shown on Figures 2 through 6, the new UG feeder will originate at an existing switchgear within the LIPA Syosset Substation and will extend in a northerly direction along South Woods Road, crossing below Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) tracks and continuing northeast along Cold Spring Road, North Hempstead Turnpike/New York State Route 25A, and west along

Moore's Hill Road, terminating at a new riser pole. The feeder cable will be installed in conduit via a combination of horizontal directional drilling (HDD) and open trench. A spare conduit will also be installed for future use. Twenty new manholes will be installed along the UG feeder cable route. In addition, approximately 100 feet of OH cable will be replaced on Lawrence Hill Road, and approximately 0.2 mile of UG distribution cable extending off of an existing feeder will be installed along Moore's Hill Road, and within the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory property. This UG cable will extend from riser poles along Moore's Hill Road and will terminate at two new pad-mounted switchgears to be installed within an asphalt and concrete lot at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory.

The Proposed Action will require: (i) the installation of one new 50-foot wood riser pole that will extend to approximately 43 feet above grade; and (ii) the replacement of approximately twelve, 35- to 45-foot existing wood distribution poles that currently extend to approximately 29.5 feet to 38.5 feet in height above grade, with new 40- to 55-foot wood poles that will extend to approximately 34 feet to 47.5 feet above grade (*see* Figures 4 through 8). Two of the twelve pole replacements will have risers installed. The new pole will be installed within an existing pole alignment. Standard pole-top equipment (cross-arms, transformers, switches, wire connections, etc.) will be installed/replaced throughout the Proposed Action area.

The Proposed Action will require approximately 0.73 acres of disturbance, of which 0.70 acres will be completed within the existing dolomite-covered Syosset Substation or paved areas, and approximately 0.03 acres will be completed within grass or roadside areas consisting of brush and shrubs.

Reasons Supporting This Determination:

The Proposed Action is an "Unlisted" Action as defined in SEQRA. An Environmental Assessment ("EA") was completed by PSEG Long Island. The EA analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action. Based on a review of the Proposed Action's scope of work in accordance with the requirements of SEQRA, a Short Environmental Assessment Form Parts 1, 2 & 3 ("SEAF") were prepared. Key findings are outlined below.

- Feeder installation will be constructed wholly UG. The new riser pole on Moore's Hill Road will be approximately 43 feet in height and will be consistent in height to the adjacent poles within the existing alignment. Ten of the twelve pole replacements will be in-kind (same construction material, same location, and no more than 10 feet higher than poles they are replacing). Two pole replacements along Moore's Hill Road will be approximately 14 feet higher above ground than the poles they are replacing (existing 40-foot poles that will be replaced with 55-foot poles); however, will be within 10 feet in height to adjacent poles within the alignment and in the immediate vicinity. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse visual impacts and given its location in areas where OH and UG infrastructure currently exists, will not result in any significant adverse land use impacts.
- The Proposed Action is located within the Oyster Bay Special Groundwater Protection Area (SGPA), which is designated as a Critical Environmental Area (CEA) to protect groundwater (*see* Figure 9). Apart from HDD below the LIRR tracks (maximum depth of 30 feet below grade), the Proposed Action activities within this CEA will involve excavation to depths of less than 15 feet below grade. Based on the United States Geological Survey Long Island Depth to Water Viewer, groundwater at corresponding work locations will occur at depths greater than 50 feet below grade. Therefore,

excavation activities within this CEA will not encounter groundwater. Further, the Proposed Action will not involve any waste discharges to ground surface or groundwater and will not involve the installation of any sanitary facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impacts to this CEA.

- As a portion of the Proposed Action is located within the New York State coastal zone, a New York State Coastal Assessment Form was completed and submitted to the New York State Department of State (NYSDOS) on October 22, 2024 (*see* Appendix A). The Proposed Action is consistent with and will not substantially hinder the achievement of any of the coastal policies set forth in 19 NYCRR Part 600.5.
- As shown on Figure 11, the Proposed Action is partially located within two historic districts listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory and the Harbor Road Historic District), which consist of multiple buildings that are listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. The Proposed Action is also located adjacent to a district that is eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places (St. John’s Episcopal Church District), which consists of multiple buildings that are eligible for listing on the State or National Register of Historic Places. In addition, two buildings that are eligible for listing on the State or National Register for Historic Places (Hill House (Jones Estate House) and Building D) are located adjacent to the Proposed Action along Cold Spring Road and North Hempstead Turnpike. UG feeder installation will not result in any permanent visual impacts, and pole replacement and installation activities will be visibly consistent with the current electric infrastructure. Two pad-mounted switchgears will be installed within the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory property; however, these will not be adjacent to any listed/eligible buildings. The Proposed Action is also located within a New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) designated archaeological buffer area. A consultation request was submitted to OPRHP on June 28, 2024. OPRHP responded indicating that the Proposed Action would have no impact on above-ground historic resources; however, recommended a Phase IA Literature Search and Sensitivity Assessment Survey (Phase 1A) be completed as the Proposed Action is located within an archeologically sensitive area (*see* Appendix B for related correspondence).

A Phase IA as completed for the Proposed Action in September and October 2024 by TRC Companies, Inc. (TRC), which concluded that several areas of archaeological sensitivity exist throughout the Proposed Action area. TRC prepared a Phase 1A report, dated October 2024, which did not recommend additional archaeological testing (a Phase 1B survey) for much of the Proposed Action area. However, TRC recommended avoidance or a Phase IB survey for the northern portions of the Proposed Action located within, and in the immediate vicinity of, the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory. PSEG Long Island confirmed that no work will occur in the areas recommended for Phase IB survey; therefore, TRC indicated that no further archaeological study is recommended. The Phase 1A report was submitted to OPRHP on November 4, 2024. OPRHP responded in a letter dated November 5, 2024, indicating that based on a review of the Phase 1A, the Proposed Action would have no impact on properties (including archaeological and/or historic resources) listed in or eligible for the New York State and National Registers of Historic Resources and no further archaeological investigations are warranted (*see* Appendix B). Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse impacts to these resources.

- As shown on Figure 12, three pole replacements and OH cable replacement along Harbor Road and Lawrence Hill Road are located adjacent to, but not within, Cold Spring Harbor State Park. Work at these poles will consist of in-kind pole replacements, which will be visually similar to the existing poles at this location. All proposed pole replacements will result in negligible ground disturbance (approximately 5 square feet per pole installation), and minor tree trimming will be required to accommodate their installations. Work activities in this area will be temporary in nature and will not impair park access, nor will it have any significant adverse impact on the public's enjoyment or appreciation of the park. Therefore, the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse impacts to Cold Spring Harbor State Park.
- Two endangered species were identified as being potentially located at or in the vicinity of the Proposed Action: tiger salamander (state-listed endangered) and northern long-eared bat (state and federally-listed endangered). Tiger Salamanders inhabit sandy pine barren areas with temporary or permanent pools for breeding. In New York, the tiger salamander is found only on Long Island with most of the known breeding colonies restricted to the Central Pine Barrens. In the absence of natural pools or ponds, it may breed in man-made depressions filled with water¹. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) regulates activities within 1,000 feet of known tiger salamander breeding sites and implements specific habitat preservation requirements for disturbances that fall within 535-feet of a breeding pond (100% preservation), and within 1,000 feet of a breeding pond (50% preservation).

Northern long-eared bats (NLEBs) spend winter hibernating in caves and mines, called hibernacula. They typically use large caves or mines with large passages and entrances; constant temperatures; and high humidity with no air currents. NLEBs roost underneath bark, in cavities, or in crevices of trees during summer. Males and non-reproductive females may also roost in cooler places, like caves and mines. Rarely, it has also been found roosting in structures like barns and sheds².

The majority of the Proposed Action will be completed within existing paved roadways or the Syosset Substation, neither of which contains vegetation, wetlands, or suitable habitat for the NLEB. Pole replacement and installation activities along Stillwell Lane, North Hempstead Turnpike/Route 25A, Lawrence Hill Road, Harbor Road, Cove Road, and Moores Hill Road in roadside grass, soil, or vegetated areas will require minor tree trimming in the immediate vicinity of the poles to accommodate their installations. These roadways are within developed residential areas, and roadside vegetation in these locations is minimal. Given the pole locations immediately adjacent to active roadways, it is unlikely that the NLEB inhabit or utilize the Proposed Action site. However, in order to ensure no adverse impacts to NLEB and no potential take (6 NYCRR Part 182) of the species, all tree trimming activities will be conducted during the hibernation season when bats are not expected to be present (November 1st through March 31st for Nassau County and December 1st through February 28th for Suffolk County). Therefore, the Proposed Action is not anticipated to have a significant adverse impact on NLEB species or suitable habitat.

A consultation request was submitted to the New York Natural Heritage Program (NYNHP) on June 28, 2024 to obtain additional information on the presence of the tiger

¹ <https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7143.html>

² <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/9045>

salamander and NLEB within the Proposed Action area. NYNHP responded with a letter dated August 13, 2024 identifying: one State-listed threatened animal species (tiger salamander); one State and federal-listed endangered species (NLEB), one rare community type (Coastal Oak-Laurel Forest), two State-listed threatened plants (Persimmon and Marsh Straw Sedge), and three State-listed endangered plants (Mitchell's Sedge, Bushy St. John's Wort, and Small White Snakeroot) as potentially located in the vicinity of the Proposed Action (*see Appendix C*).

Correspondence with the NYNHP indicated suitable habitat for tiger salamander are located within 100 feet of the Proposed Action near Cove Road (*see Appendix C*). NYSDEC recommends that 100 percent of existing upland forest habitat must be preserved in projects within 535 feet of suitable tiger salamander habitat. The only activity that will be completed within 535 of tiger salamander habitat includes the replacement of an existing utility pole (*see Figure 8*), which will require a maximum disturbance of 5 square feet around the pole. This pole is located within an area of turfgrasses that appears to undergo regular mowing and maintenance. PSEG Long Island submitted an application for a determination of no incidental take to NYSDEC on October 8, 2024 so a formal determination can be issued for the Proposed Action. NYSDEC responded in a letter dated January 8, 2025 indicating that the proposed activities will not result in an adverse modification of tiger salamander habitat and therefore, an Incidental Take Permit is not necessary (*see Appendix C*). Given the limited area of disturbance for the pole replacement and no modification will occur to the tiger salamander habitat, no potential for significant adverse impacts are expected to this species.

The Rare Community Type and State-Listed threatened and endangered plants identified by NYNHP were listed as being located in the vicinity of Harbor Road. The only activities to be completed in the vicinity of Harbor Road include three pole replacements (Pole Nos. 92, 93, and 96), which will require approximately a maximum of 5 square feet of disturbance around each pole. A botanical field survey was conducted by GEI Consultants (GEI) on October 8 and 28, 2024 (*see Appendix D*) to assess whether the NYNHP identified rare community or threatened/endangered plants are present in the vicinity of these pole replacements. None of the plants or the rare community reported by NYNHP were observed in the vicinity of Pole Nos. 92 and 93 during GEI's field survey. As these pole replacements are located in an upland disturbed right-of-way, and given the absence of the NYNHP reported rare community and threatened/endangered plants, GEI concluded that these rare plants and ecological communities will not be impacted by these pole replacement activities. Mixed oak woodland with Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) was observed approximately 700 feet norther of Pole No. 96. This plant community may meet characteristics of Coastal Oak-Laurel Forest (the Rare Community Type reported by NYNHP in their response). However, this community was observed at least 50 feet from the roadway right-of-way. GEI recommended that all work at Pole No. 96 be confined within a 10-foot radius to avoid any potential impacts to this rare community. As PSEG Long Island's planned activities will be completed within a 5 square foot radius around the existing pole, no adverse impacts are expected for this plant community.

- The EAF Mapper Summary Report indicated that the Proposed Action is located on, or adjoining wetlands or other waterbodies regulated by a federal, state, or local agency, as well as within the 100-year flood plain. However, based on a review of the NYSDEC

Environmental Resource Mapper and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Maps, the Proposed Action is not located on or adjoining a regulated wetland or waterbody, or within the 100-year floodplain. Therefore, the Proposed Action does not have the potential for significant adverse impacts to these resources.

No potential for a significant adverse impact on the environment, flora, fauna, community character or human health has been identified as a result of the Proposed Action. Based on the SEAF and PSEG Long Island's recommendation according to the standards as set forth in SEQRA, the Proposed Action will not result in any significant adverse environmental impacts and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

For Further Information:

Contact Person: Erin Gorman, Manager Environmental Projects and Permitting,
PSEG Long Island

Address: 175 East Old Country Road, Hicksville, NY 11801

Telephone Number: (800) 490-0025

E-mail: PSEGLongIslandSEQR@pseg.com

/s/ Billy Raley

Billy Raley, Senior Vice President, Transmission and Distribution,
Long Island Power Authority

Dated: January 23, 2025